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State Fire Marshal urges citizens help in solving arson cases in central Kentucky

Nearly a dozen fires in recent weeks considered suspicious

FRANKFORT, Ky. – (Jan. 6, 2012) – A startling increase in suspected arson fires around several central Kentucky communities has prompted Kentucky State Fire Marshal William Swope to seek the public's help in solving the crimes.

Since December, nearly a dozen fires of suspicious origin have been set in Fayette, Jessamine, Lincoln and Pulaski counties, prompting state and local officials to ramp up efforts to get information from the public.

"The Kentucky Arson Task Force has established an Arson Hotline for citizens to use in giving investigators information that will help find the person or persons responsible for these fires," said State Fire Marshal William Swope. "These fires have not only cost home and business owners millions of dollars in losses, but they also could cause injuries or even deaths. We need the public's help and the information they provide could save a life."

Two suspected arson fires at a lumberyard in Lincoln County caused more than \$1.5 million in damages. It is suspected that the same person or persons who set those fires are also responsible for causing damage to the historic Eubank High School building in neighboring Pulaski County.

In Jessamine County, several fires in December damaged a lumberyard and three nearby houses. And, in Lexington, a fire in a vacant apartment capped off a spate of suspicious fires in one neighborhood dating back several months.

“So far we’ve been fortunate that no injuries or deaths have occurred,” said Swope. “We need the public’s help to make sure the people responsible are caught before something tragic happens.”

Swope urges anyone with information about any of these suspected arson fires to call the Arson Hotline at 1-800-27-Arson.

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